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The French of the Tundra. Early modern European views of the Tungus in translation

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The French of the Tundra. Early modern European views of the Tungus in translation

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Map of the repartition of the Evenki in Russia and China
click here

1 "*Tous les Toungouses en general sont braves & robustes*", Louis De Jaucourt writes in his entry on Tatars in the 15th volume of the *Encyclopédie* to which the French Protestant scholar was one of the main contributors (De Jaucourt undated[1]); that is – "all of the Tungusic peoples are generally brave and robust" – or should we say "courageous and robust[2]"? Courage is no doubt the notion to be stressed here[3]. "*Toungouses*" is rendered by "Tungusic peoples", since De Jaucourt mentions four groups among the Tungus in his article[4]. Whatever the case may be, it is important to stress outright, that travel writing "shares with ethnography an interpretative view of foreign cultures and societies, while translation refracts the act of interpretation still further", as Alison E. Martin and Susan Pickford observe (Martin & Pickford 2012, p. 2), no matter how faithful (or not) a translator may have wished to remain to the text[5]. Given the scarcity of reliable information about Siberia in the early days of the Enlightenment, the first eyewitness accounts of the Tungus and other Siberian indigenous peoples available in European languages were quite sensational. Indeed, to Western Europeans of the late 17th century, Siberia "must have been a terra incognita, since the representations of Herberstein, Massa, Olearus and even Witsen's relied entirely on hearsay", Michael Hundt notes in his introduction to a reprint of Isbrand Ides' and Adam Brand's narratives[6]. To give but one

example of the kind of Tungus images that were circulating in early modern Europe, here is a passage from Isaac Massa (1586-1643?) reprinted in English translation in the famous travel anthology *His Pilgrimes* edited by Samuel Purchas (1577?-1626): "These people were deformed with swellings under their throats, and in their speech they thratled like Turkie-cocks. Their language seemed not much to differ from the Samoieds, which also understood many of their words[7]".

2 No wonder, then, that Isbrand Ides' and Brand's narratives raised widespread attention since their travelogues were based on first-hand observation, to witness the many editions of their texts, including a number of translations[8]. Though Isbrand Ides (1657-1708/9?[9]) was the leader of the Tsar's embassy to China in the years 1692-1695, Adam Brand[10], who accompanied Ides, managed to publish the first full-length account of the journey[11] in 1698, the English edition appearing the same year in London[12], to be followed by the French edition in 1699[13] and a Dutch edition in 1707, as well as an abridged version in Spanish in 1701. A new, significantly augmented German edition was published in 1712, reprinted in 1723 and 1734. Long excerpts were later included in numerous anthologies of travels. As to Isbrand Ides's account, it was first published in full in 1704 in Dutch[14], translated into English in 1706[15] and into German in 1707[16]. Regarding French editions of Ides' text, a long excerpt was included in the anthology *Voyages de Corneille Le Brun par la Moscovie, en Perse, et aux Indes orientales* in 1718[17] and a more substantial version in Jean-Frédéric Bernard's important collection *Recueil de voyages au Nord*[18].

3 Such translations played a major role in disseminating (new) knowledge about foreign cultures during the 18th century, as Brunhilde Wehinger (Wehinger 2008, p. 7) observes: "Translations are an essential part of cultural transfer which gave the European Enlightenment its transcultural character and openness while contributing to the emerging of a literary public distinguished by its unfailing interest in anything new and cultural development of other European countries". The aim was to rapidly render available new material and to do so in a form that would be agreeable to the target audience, the problem being one of the potential dichotomy between faithfulness and elegance, a subject Voltaire addressed in his reception speech to the French Academy in 1746[19]. Translators were expected to accommodate the taste of the audience, still characterized in the first half of 18th century in France by the aesthetic norms of French classicism. French translators of the first half of the 17th century were inspired by a principle known as the "*belles infidèles*[20]". The aim was to emulate, rather than imitate, as Emmanuel Bury (Bury [1968] 1995, p. 497[21]) puts it neatly. This spirit, or attitude, continued to characterise French translations in the first half of the 18th century (Wehinger 2008, p. 9) even though the "*belles infidèles*" – understood as a genre – were over by 1660[22]. Still, "the free, creative, translation style of the *belles infidèles*, although not universally accepted, had nevertheless shaped approaches to translation across Europe", according to Alison E. Martin and Susan Pickford who observe a turn to "literalism" during what they refer to as the "Romantic period" (Martin & Pickford 2012, pp. 9-10). Though this seems to have been the case in general terms, the liberties translators of travelogues were prepared to take do not appear to have been mainly due to the "*belles infidèles*" however, as Odile Gannier notes[23]. Content would have been considered more important than form[24]. Still, as we will see below, stylistic effects are not only unavoidable, but they are an essential part of the rhetoric of travel. May one just mention in passing the fact that explorers' accounts of the Enlightenment tended to be

brushed up, not to say polished, either by professional writers or the travellers themselves to suit the taste of the day. In the case of translations, the effort was even more obvious as translators/editors did not hesitate at all to either abridge, augment or comment on the original text, all in the name of the target audience's assumed horizon of expectations and to avoid the most fearsome of enemies: *l'ennui* – that is, to bore the reader[25]. We are obviously far from a contemporary sense of authorship and authenticity but this fact should not stand in our way when it comes to reading travelogues in translation of the period. In the present context, I propose to compare several translations of Ides' and Brand's texts in order to show how they may vary from one edition to another, a phenomenon that needs to be taken into account more systematically in order to discuss the impact of early modern travelogues and the dissemination of foreign – in this case Tungus – images across Europe.

4 To return to Ides and Brand, Odile Gannier mentions the former as an example of translations that had been published not only to provide valuable new information to scholars or *philosophes* keen on widening their horizon and elaborating in ever more subtle or diversified forms their philosophies of history or essays on man, but also because they appealed to those who liked to be entertained by accounts of "exotic" manners[26]. Once again, Ides' and Brand's travelogues promised to hold particularly exciting treasures in store since the authors seemed in a position to affirm that they had seen all they describe with their own eyes, no matter how prominently a translator/editor may have manipulated the text for those reading them in translation.

5 Ides' Embassy met with the Tungus on the Angara river[27], that is Evenki and/or Even people according to Michael Hundt. Their (proto-)ethnographic observations focus mainly on religion, clothing, housing and food as well as other points (Hundt 1999, p. 44). Shamanistic practice was of particular interest to them and is therefore commented on in more detail (Hundt 1999, p. 47). Ides starts off his description of Tungus manners with an account of meeting a shaman. Here is the English version:

> Some Miles upwards from hence live several *Tunguzians*, amongst which is also their famed *Schaman* or *Diabolical Artist*. The reports which passed concerning this Cheat made me very desirous to see him. Wherefore in order to gratifie my curiosity I went to those Parts, to visit him and his Habitation. I found him a tall old Man, that had twelve Wives, and was not ashamed of the Art he pretended to: he shewed me his *Conjuring Habit*, and other Tools which he used. First I saw his Coat, made of join-ed Iron-Work, consisting of all manner of representations of Birds, Fishes, Ravens, Owls, &c. besides several Beasts and Birds Claws, and Bills, Saws, Hammers, Knives, Sabirs, and the Images of several Beasts, &c. so that all the parts of the Diabolical Robe being fixed together by Joints, might at pleasure be taken to pieces. He has also Iron Stockings for his Feet and Legs, suitable to his Robe, and two great Bear Claws over his Hands. His Head was likewise adorned, with such like Images, and fixed to his Forehead were two Iron Bucks-Horns. When he designs to Conjure he takes a Drum made after their fashion in his Left Hand, and a flat Staff covered with the Skins of Mountain-Mice in his Right Hand; thus equipped he jumps cross legged, which motion shakes all these Iron Plates, and makes a great clangor; besides which, he at the same time beats his Drum, and with Eyes distorted upwards, a strong bearish voice makes a dismal noise. (Ides 1706, pp. 29-30)

6 Let us note several points in the text to begin with: the shaman is referred to as a "diabolical artist", showing no sense of shame in doing what he does, i.e. the text introduces a paradigm reflecting a Christian worldview condemning any manifestation of shamanism as sorcery. The shaman is polygamous up to what may have seemed quite an astonishing degree from a European point-of-view, as issue we return to below. His

activities are assimilated to the art of conjuring and diabolic practice (*the diabolical robe*), involving sound described as being dismal (i.e. miserable and unpleasant to hear). Nothing very surprising here, modern scholars or ethnographers might say. More interestingly to the latter no doubt, Ides includes quite a few details concerning dress and performance. How do the details focused on here appear in other translations and what does the original text say? The English, French and German translations keep the term "shaman" Ides uses in the original, followed by the expression "Duivelskonstenaar" (Ysbrants Ides 1704, p. 35), rendered identically in English, altered in German to "teuffels=bechwerer" (conjurer of the devil, Yßbrant Ides 1707, p. 64) and followed in the latter by the term "schwarzkünstler" – magician or someone practicing black magic. The French translation of 1718 uses the terms *schaman* and *magicien* ("*un fameux* Schaman *ou magicien*", Wetstein & Wetstein 1718, p. 117) whereas the longer version published by Bernard in 1727 adds more freely the following comments once the *shaman* and *magicien* has been introduced: "*Je trouvai un grand home, extrêmement vieux, qui entretenoit pourtant douze femmes. Il avoit l'air fier, & l'étoit en effet, jusqu'à l'insolence, à cause du credit que sa profession lui donnoit parmi ses Compatriotes*" (Bernard 1727, p. 56 – "I found a tall man, extremely old who nonetheless kept twelve wives. He looked proud and indeed, he was, even to the point of being insolent due to the esteem in which his compatriots held him because of his profession"). All the texts mention 12 wives and his lack of shame. Here is the Dutch text that the English translation is largely faithful to: "*Hy was een lang oud man, had twaalf wyven, en was wegens zyne konst onbeschaamt*" (Ysbrants Ides 1704, p. 35) – and the first French version: "c'étoit un grand homme, assez avancé en âge, qui avoit douze femmes, & ne rougissoit pas de sa possession" (Wetstein & Wetstein 1718, p. 117), drawing on a periphrase that is more ambiguous in the sense that it may be understood to link the notion of "shamelessness" to the idea of "having twelve wives", unless one understands "possession" to be a rendering of the state a shaman is in when shamanising or in the sense of "possessing" a gift, an art or a skill, whereas the German text clearly insists on the shaman's pretended insolence due to his art, like the French text of 1727 does ("*und war wegen seiner Kunst sehr unverschämt*" (Yßbrant Ides 1707, p. 65).

7 The exotic potential of a polygamous man keeping wives by the dozen is then extended from one individual in Ides' text to the whole group of men encountered in Brand's text, a passage the English translation renders in the following terms: "How mean and miserable soever their Condition is, they all of them have several Wives, whom they look upon as their greatest Treasure: The richer sort have often 10 or 12, whom they buy from their Fathers, sometimes for 10, sometimes for 15 Reen-deers a-piece" (Brand 1698b, p. 51). This is largely faithful to the German original, even if their life is described as simply poor ("*erbärmlich*", Brand 1698a, p. 81), rather than "mean and miserable", a neat formula the English translator evidently would not refrain from. Similarly, the French text speaks of extreme misery and poverty ("*extréme misère & pauvreté*", Brand 1699, p. 72), then mentioning the number of wives without specifying that this polygamous state would be considered a treasure. On the contrary, it is condemned as an abominable habit in French ("*une coûtume abominable*", Brand 1699, p. 73), just like it is in German, but not expressly in English. Brand's text thus varies considerably from Ides' in certain specific points. This may be due to a number of reasons, such as a different comprehension or misunderstanding of what has been observed/explained to the travellers, an aptitude to exaggerate if we are not simply dealing with a proverbial "travel lie" for which the genre of the travelogue was still notorious in the late 17th century. Whatever the case may be, in

the examples given so far, we have moved from variations in translating a specific term to adding extra words or using circumlocution rather than a direct translation in order to show different types of variation between the original and some translations, as well as an elaboration on a particular scene in Brand's text that represents quite a significant difference with Ides' descriptions.

8 Let us return to the figure of the shaman to look more closely at the subject of his practice. This is how an excerpt of Ides' description of a shamanistic *séance* appears in English:

> If the *Tunguzians* have any thing stole from them, or desire to be informed of any thing, in the first place, he must be paid before hand: after which he plays the tricks already related, jumps and roars till a Black-bird comes and sits on the top of his Hutt, which is open above to let out the Smoak: As soon as he gets sight of the Bird, he falls into a swoon, and the Bird vanishes immediately: After he hath remained bereft of his Senses for about a quarter of an Hour, he comes to himself, and tells the Querist who hath robb'd him, or answers his Question of what sort soever; and they tell us, that all that he saith proves true. (Ides 1706, p. 30)

9 Among the elements to be noted, one can draw attention to the expression "playing tricks on someone", suggesting the "trickster" figure and the notion of "cheating". Let's note the idea of losing consciousness also ("remained bereft of his Senses") and the *addendum* that the shaman is believed to correctly foretell the future. This is close enough to the Dutch original as far as the two first points are concerned: "*Zoo haast hy dien in 't gezigt krygt, valt hy op de aarde in zvym, en de vogem verdwynt ook aanstonds. Nadat hy nu als dood en buiten verstand een vierendeel uurs gelegen heest, komt hy wederom by zich zelven, en zegt dan den vrager* [...]" (Ysbrants Ides 1704, p. 36). The German version is also similar in a number of respects, but does add some ideas while expanding on others: "*So bald als er diesen ansichtig wird/ so fällt er auf die erde in schwindel und entzückung/ und den augenblick verschwindet der vogel wieder. Wann er nun als todt und ohne verstand etwa eine viertel=stunde gelegen/ so kommt er wieder zu sich selbst/ und sagt alsdann dem der ihn raths gefragt/ wer ihn bestohlen/ und was er sonsten zu wissen begehrt; und da soll dann auch alles/ wie sie sagen/ nach dem wort des Zauberers eintreffen*" (Yßbrant Ides 1707, p. 66). In the German text, the shaman drops to the ground with his head spinning around, feeling enchanted as soon as he notices the bird, remaining on the floor for fifteen minutes as if he were dead and, to borrow the English phrase, "bereft of his senses". Once he has recovered, he answers any questions people may wish to ask him, the latter affirming that things happen exactly like the "magician" said they would. The first French text remains strikingly more restrained on this occasion: "*Ensuite il tombe à la renverse, comme un homme hors de soi, & l'oiseau s'envole. Il reprend ses esprits au bout d'un quart d'heure, & declare ce qu'on veut savoir*" (Wetstein & Wetstein 1718, p. 118). In the French edition from 1727, the terms have been slightly altered, introducing a different meaning: the shaman no longer drops down like someone out of himself but as a "*frénétique*" (Bernard 1727, p. 57); the act of answering queries is rendered as "*prononce l'Oracle*". The considerable weight of his dress does not appear in the 1727 edition, a point that Ides moves to in the original and that the other translations also insist on. All of the texts mention his wealth, but Bernard's edition is once again more elaborate by adding that all of the "idolaters" in the country consult this "false prophet" on most events in their lives and that he can charge anything he likes for his "pretended predictions[28]".

10 Brand's description of the shamanistic séance resembles Ides' text though it introduces a pejorative term that invites comment: "*Indessen fällt der Pfaffe ohne Verstand danieder/*

welcher denn alsbald von ihnen als ein Heiliger geehret und gelobet wird" (Brand 1698a, p. 81). The German term "*Pfaffe*", derived from the Latin word "*papa*", originally meant a cleric, but has had a negative connotation ever since Luther used it to mock Roman-Catholic priests[29]. This idea is reflected in the English translation as well: "the Priest, as if strucken with an Epileptick fit, falls down upon the ground, and is reverenc'd by these ignorant People as a Saint" (Brand 1698b, p. 51), and in the French text, published in Amsterdam: "*le* Schaman *tombe à la renverse, comme s'il avoit perdu l'esprit, & c'est alors qu'ils lui rendent les honneurs comme à un Saint*" (Brand 1699, p. 72). This is no doubt a Protestant effort to assimilate shamanism with the worship of saints in Roman Catholicism considered by Protestants to be a form of "idolatry", one of the key notions at work in Ides' and Brand's narratives as well. The former mentions wooden idols kept in the huts. The rather restrained Dutch version is faithfully rendered in sober English terms: "They have in their Hutts carved wooden Idols, about half an Ell long, with the representation of humane Faces, which they feed as the *Ostiacks* do, with their best sort Food, which runs out of their Mouths over their Bodies" (Ysbrants Ides 1706 p. 31[30]). In German, the best food is served to the idols also, but what follows is slightly more ambiguous: "*welche sie eben als wie die Ostiaken/ mit den besten Speisen beköstigen/ die sie so essen/ daß sie aus dem munde über den ganzen leib abfliessen*" (Yßbrant Ides 1707, p. 69) – literally: "(the idols) which they feed like the Ostiak do/ with their best dishes/ which they eat in such a way/ that the food runs out of the mouth down the whole body", presumably down the idol, though the grammatical ambiguity of the possessive pronoun might also be understood as referring to the Tungus, implying barbarian eating habits, the details of which the first French translator obviously hastened to spare his readers: "[...] *des idoles de bois* [...] *auxquelles ils presentent à manger ce qu'ils ont de meilleur, comme les* Ostiaques*, & avec aussi peu de propreté*" (Wetstein & Wetstein 1718, p. 118) – literally, "to whom they hand the best dishes, like the Ostiak do, with a like lack of cleanliness". In the second French text, the editor has opted for a longer, more mocking version to bemuse his readers: "*Leurs Idoles sont des pieces de bois à figure humaine,* [...]: *chaque* Tunguse *a la sienne particulière dans sa cabane, où il lui présente, tous les jours, ce qu'il a de plus exquis à manger ; mais ces Dieux n'ont pas meilleur appetite que ceux des* Ostikakes*, & laissent ruisseler comme eux, des deux côtés de leur bouche, les alimens qu'on veut leur faire avaler*" (Bernard 1727, p. 59) – "their idols are wooden figures in human shape [...] each Tungus has his own in his hut to which he presents every day the most exquisite dishes he can offer; but these Gods are not hungrier than those of the Ostiak; no matter what food they are served, they let it run out of their mouth". Brand also chose to focus on this element, specifying in German that the Tungus smear food into the mouths of their idols, adding a rhetorical question, obviously designed to be met with by approval: "*Ist das nicht grosse Blindheit?*" (Brand 1698a, p. 80) – "Isn't that great blindness?" The question is not raised in the English version, but dealt with in free style, no comment being added: "[...] if they have offered up their Prayers to them, and are deceived in their expectations, the God is thrown out of doors, till they happen to have better luck; then they are admitted again, and have their full and best share of what they have got abroad" (Brand 1698b, p. 50). Though the feeding of idols is mentioned, this is quite a long way from what we find in German, the source text that the French translator picks up to add the following moralizing remarks to guide Francophone readers: "*Peut-on voir une semblable folie, & l'aveuglement de ces Peuples, sans être saisi d'étonnement ?*" (Brand 1699, p. 71) – "Has anyone ever seen like madness and blindness as in these peoples without being seized by amazement?".

11 Food and faith are well-known vectors of trying to purvey a sense of human diversity in travel literature, both as far as texts and images are concerned[31]; so are descriptions of looks and ideals of beauty. The Dutch, English and German texts use very similar terms to suggest that the Tungus are tall and tough: "*lange sterke menschen*" in Dutch (Ysbrants Ides 1704, p. 36); almost identically in German "*lange starcke leute*" (Yßbrant Ides 1707, p. 67); "tall and strong men" in English. The first French text provides a slightly different image: "*robustes & bien faits de corps*" (Wetstein & Wetstein, p. 118), while Bernard is closer to the original: "*grands & robustes*". On the subject of tattoos, quite notable differences appear. In Dutch, Ides introduces the subject by simply stating that the Tungus also like beauty – "*Zy zyn ook liefhebbers van schoonheit*" (Ysbrants Ides 1704, p. 37), hardly altered in German, though rendered in slightly more enthusiastic terms – "*sie seyn auch grosse liebhaber der schönheit*" (Yßbrant Ides 1707, p. 67 – "but they are also great lovers of beauty"). For the English translator, Ides' observation obviously needed to be qualified: "These People are admirers of Beauty, according to their notion of it" (Ysbrants Ides 1706, p. 31) – and even more rigorously so in the first French edition: "Ils aiment la beauté, don't ils ont cependant une idée fort singuliere" (Wetstein & Wetstein p. 118 – "they are admirers of beauty of which they have nonetheless a very peculiar understanding"). In the second French version, the idea of a strong dichotomy between European and Tungus ideals of beauty is enhanced still further by means of cultural relativism: "*Les* Tunguses *sont grands amateurs de la beauté du visage: mais, pour l'avoir beau selon eux, il faut l'avoir tout déchiqueté*" (Bernard 1727, p. 58) – "the Tungus are great admirers of beauty, but to have a beautiful face, according to them, one needs to have it all jagged". Brand also notes a sense of beauty in the Tungus: "*In ihrer Jugend lassen sie zum Zierrath (so bey diesen Leuten aufs höchste* aestimiret *wird) ihre Gesichter mit von Kohlen geschwärzten Fäden auf allerhand Art durchgraben und benehen*" (Brand 1698a, p. 77) – "In their youth, they have their faces ploughed through and sown with a thread blackened by charcoal in diverse manner for the sake of beauty (which is held in highest esteem by these people)", a habit that the English translator renders by stating that "they take a particular pride to have their Cheeks stitch'd while they are young" with black Thread through and through" (Brand 1698b, p. 48). The fact that an author or translator does not choose to comment or condemn outright obviously does not mean that the observer is admiring this or that habit in a given version. Many readers of the late 17th and early 18th century might well have been tempted to interpret such passages as examples of "antiphrasis", their aesthetic ideals being possibly somewhat challenged by the forms of radical otherness that Ides and Brand were presenting, while scholars were increasingly interested in Siberia as "a laboratory of the Enlightenment as far as the production of knowledge in natural history is concerned", according to Peter Schweitzer[32].

12 At the same time, it needs to be pointed out that Brand was also struck by the capacity of the young Tungus to endure the procedure of having their faces tattooed, rendered in English thus: "This unaccountable piece of pride, as painful as it is, (as causing great Swellings in their Faces) they look upon it as Badges of Honour, transmitted to them from their Ancestors" (Brand 1698b, pp. 48-49). One will note the proto-ethnographic interest in the origin of this custom, besides the moralizing tone of the English translator considering tattoos to be clearly a manifestation of pride, the sin that the Bible – any Protestant's principal written reference – warns believers about repeatedly. The French text pays homage to the courage of the Tungus: "*Ils ne paroissent pas néanmois se soucier beaucoup de ce mal, la douleur ne les afflige point, au contraire, ils la supportent avec courage,*

dans la joie qu'ils-ont de se voir si magnifiquement ornez des marques paternelles" (Brand 1699, p. 69) – "they do not appear much concerned about this suffering; pain does not trouble them, on the contrary, they stand pain with courage, happy as they are to see themselves so splendidly ornamented by paternal signs[33]". No matter how idolatrous the Tungus may have appeared to early travellers, the latter were struck by their strength and daring – their being robust and courageous, the two attributes De Jaucourt highlights at the beginning of his entry on the Tungus for the *Encyclopédie* for which he drew on the published accounts available at the time.

13 What about the Tungus' sense of beauty? De Jaucourt did not make much of this, insisting mainly, as mentioned above, on their tall and robust figure, a description we can easily trace back to Ides and Brand at this stage. He added that they are generally more active than other Siberian peoples (De Jaucourt, undated, p. 923). Johann Eberhard Fischer (1697-1771) also considered the Tungus to be a lively, bright people bestowed by nature with sound common sense[34]. Later observers focus on Tungus nomadism understood as one of the principal reasons for their cheerfulness. Here is a fairly faithful rendering of Ferdinand von Wrangel's (1797-1870) account in the English translation edited by Lieut.-Col. Edward Sabine (1788-1883), a member of several Arctic expeditions led by John Ross and William Edward Parry and later President of the Royal Society: "[...] I may be permitted to remark that I regard the nomade Tunguses and Iukahirs as the happiest people in Siberia. They are not tied down to any spot, but wander as circumstances induce, always taking with them their families and their small possessions, and never feeling the grief of parting from a home. They scarcely seem to have any anxiety for the future, but cheerfully enjoy the present (Wrangel [1840] 1844, p. 208)". Ferdinand von Wrangel was still more enthusiastic, though, in the German version published in Berlin in 1839: "*Ueberhaupt zeichnen sich die Tungusen durch ihre Gewandheit, Beweglichkeit und ihren beständigen, munteren Frohsinn ganz besonders vor allen hiesigen Völkerschaften aus, so dass wir sie gemeiniglich die* Franzosen der Tundra *zu nennen pflegten*" (Wrangel [1840] 1844, p. 220) – "More generally, the Tungus distinguish themselves by their dexterity, nimbleness and constant cheerfulness from all the other peoples here, so much so that we were in the habit of calling them the *French of the Tundra*[35]". Interestingly enough, this passage does not appear in the English translation, nor does it in the French[36]. Whatever the editorial reasons for this "omission" may have been in either language, we are clearly still in the long 18th century when it comes to translating travel accounts, as these editorial remarks by Sabine about Wrangel's narrative illustrate: "In the following year, 1840, the first edition of the present volume was published, being a translation made by Mrs. Sabine from the German of M. Engelhardt, reduced into a somewhat smaller compass than the original, partly by the omission of the meteorological tables, partly by the substitution of a more simple and concise style, and partly by the occasional curtailment of repetitions which are not infrequent in different portions of the original work[37]". But the trope of Tungus elegance was there to last. Matthias Alexander Castrén (1813-1852) called the Tungus "a distinguished, well-dressed and elegant people one could rightly consider as the aristocrats of Siberia[38]", an opinion later echoed by Carl Hiekisch (1840-1901) in his inaugural dissertation, speculating about the origin of the Tungus' distinguished nature, suggesting that their "refined, courtly manners have been inherited from their ancestors at a time when the latter were still sedentary living in orderly social conditions[39]" (Hiekisch 1879, p. 69) since such "refined rules could hardly be developed over vast stretches of thinly-populated land among hunting nomads but only there where people live in regular and intense contact[40]" (Hiekisch 1879, p. 69). We may no longer be in the

long 18th century at this particular point, but the influence of Enlightenment thought is still manifest. No matter how little early travellers may have appreciated the Tungus' sense of elegance, it clearly becomes a trope in the 19th century. To those German-speaking travellers and ethnographers, the Tungus were the French of the tundra, like it or not.

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NOTES

1. De Jaucourt (1704-1779). On Siberian culture in the *Encyclopédie*, see also Belissa 2012, pp. 161-173.
2. NB: published translations apart and unless indicated otherwise, all translations are mine.
3. This idea is notably confirmed in the 19th century by German agronomist Johann Karl Ehrenfried Kegel (1784-1863) in reference to the Even described as "courageous and good marksmen" (quoted in Kasten 2013, pp. 207-221, 214, my translation).
4. De Jaucourt specifies that the Russians divide the "Tongous" Tartars or "Tunguses" into four principal branches: "the Podkamena-Toungousi, living in between the Yenisei and Lena, north of the Angara; the Sabatski-Toungousi, between the Lena and the back end of the gulf of Kamtchatka, around the 60th parallel, north of the Aldan river; the Olenni-Toungousi living towards the source of the Lena and the Aldan, north of the Amur river; and the Conni-Toungousi who live between Lake Baikal and Nerzinskoi as well as on the Amur" (De Jaucourt p. 922, my translation).
5. In an article on pietism and translation, Douglas H. Shantz discusses notably the work of Gerhard Tersteegen (1697-1769) who estimates to have translated as faithfully as possible a selection of the life of Gregory Lopez ("*mit möglichster Treue*", rendered by Shantz as "with the greatest possible faithfulness"). See Shantz 2015, p. 340.
6. Hundt 1999, pp. 64-65 (my translation). The sources Hundt refers to are: Sigmund von Herberstein (1486-1566), *Moscouia der Hauptstat in Reissen* [...] (Wien, 1557); Isaac Massa, *Beschryvinghe Vander Samoyeden Landt in Tartarien* [...] (Amsterdam, 1612); Adam Olearius (1599-1671), *Offt begehrte Beschreibung Der Newen Orientalischen Reise* [...] (Schleswig 1647; new, augmented edition: Schleswig, 1656) and Nicolaes Witsen (1641-1717), *Noord en Oost Tartarye* [...] (Amsterdam, 1692).
7. Purchas 1625, p. 527. NB: original spelling of printed sources in Dutch, English, French and German is preserved throughout.
8. Michael Hundt discusses at some length the complex publishing history of these two texts in the introduction to his edition of the two travelogues (Hundt 1999, pp. 66-72).
9. For a brief account of the Dutchman's life see Hundt's introduction 1999, pp. 1-4.
10. Fewer details are known about this German merchant. See Hundt's introduction 1999, pp. 5-8.
11. Brand 1698a.

12. Brand 1698b.

13. Brand 1699.

14. Ysbrants Ides 1704.

15. Ysbrants Ides 1706.

16. Yßbrant Ides 1707.

17. Wetstein & Wetstein 1718, pp. 100-143.

18. Bernard 1727, pp. 1-217.

19. Voltaire 1746, www.academie-francaise.fr/discours-de-reception-de-m-voltaire (accessed 9 July 2015).

20. See Zuber [1968] 1995.

21. "[...] *l'imitation doit céder le pas à l'*émulation".

22. See Zuber [1968] 1995, pp. 130-161.

23. Gannier 2014, p. 723 : "*Les relations de voyage n'étant généralement pas considérées comme des textes littéraires, leur traduction offre souvent des caractéristiques propres aux textes techniques, dont l'intérêt n'est pas avant tout stylistique. Si l'on parle de 'belles infidèles' pour les traductions littéraires, les libertés éventuelles prises par les traductions de récits de voyage s'expliquent par d'autres raisons*".

24. *Ibid.*, p. 753: "*Les traductions des voyages suivent le même principe : contrairement aux textes littéraires, la forme du texte original importe peu. Seul le contenu est visé*".

25. *Ibid.*, pp. 745, 747.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 725: "*Une autre catégorie peut regrouper les voyages individuels à l'étranger faits par des étrangers et traduits pour l'instruction personnelle ou le divertissement des lecteurs français par exemple les* Voyages au Nord *paru chez l'éditeur Jean-Frédéric Bernard à Amsterdam en 1727, et contenant entre autres* Le Voyage de Moscou à la Chine par M. Everard Isbrants Ides, ambassadeur de Moscovie, *commencé en 1692 et traduit du hollandais ; ou la description des* Mœurs et coutumes des Ostiackes *et autres* Remarques curieuses sur le royaume de Sibérie, *traduites de l'allemand de Jean Bernard Muller, capitaine des Dragons au service de la Suède, pendant sa captivité en Sibérie, vers 1712). Ce type de voyage plaît au public curieux des mœurs 'exotiques'*".

27. Hundt provides the following dates for the embassy: departure from Moscow on March 3, 1692; arrival in Bejing November 3, 1693 where the travellers stayed until February 19, 1694. They returned to Moscow the following year, February 1.

28. *Recueil des voyages au Nord*, Bernard 1727, p. 57: "*Tous les Idolâtres du Pays ont recours à ce faux Profète, dans la plupart des événemens de leur vie : &, come on lui done tout ce qu'il demande pour ses prétendues predictions", il a ramassé des richesses considerable, qui consistent en bestiaux*". Note the alliterations here, as above in English, "mean and miserable", effects that make it difficult to affirm that authors of travelogues and their translators would not have been interested in style (see again n. 26).

29. See "*Pfaffe*" *in Deutsches Wörterbuch von Jacob und Wilhelm Grimm* (Grimm & Grimm [1889] 1999, pp. 1584-1585).

30. In Dutch: "*In hunne hutten hebben zy Afgoden, van hout gesneden, omtrent een halve elle lang, van menschen gedaante, die zy even eens de kost geecen als de Ostiakken, met de beste spyze die zy eaten, datze uit den mond over het lyf loopt*" (Ysbrants Ides 1704, pp. 39-40).

31. A striking example is the image showing two Tungus in front of a tent and other characters as well as a row of tents in the background, the caption specifying the elements considered of particular interest in terms of "otherness". In the English version of Ides' account, the caption of the illustration (Ysbrants Ides 1706, between pp. 30-31) reads: "A. The Idol in his Tent. B. Dead corps laid to rot. C. Dogs and Cats hung up being their food". In the first French edition, the image (Wetstein & Wetstein 1718, p. 119) is presented in slightly different terms: "*A. Cabane avec l'Idole. B. Corps de leurs Amis Morts. C. Chiens pendus, d'ont ils se nourissent*" – the cats having been dropped in the French text. On travel imagery, see also Borm 1999, pp. 169-182.

32. Schweitzer 2013, p. 15: "*Wo bisher kaum ethnographische Neugier an Sibirien bestanden hatte, wird Sibirien im 18. Jahrhundert zum Laboratorium der Aufklärung bezüglich naturalistischer Wissensproduktion*".
33. On the practice and possible meaning of tattoos among the Tungus see Beffa & Delaby 1993-1994, pp. 321-322.
34. Fischer 1768, p. 110: "*Die Tungusen, ein munteres, aufgewecktes, und von der natur mit einem guten verstand begabtes volk* [...]".
35. Note that the word "Gewandtheit", translated here by "dexterity" may also take the meaning of "elegance".
36. Wrangel 1843.
37. Sabine 1844 Preface, *in* Wrangel 1884.
38. Castrén 1856, p. 250: "*Ausser Russen und Deportirten von verschiedenen Nationen trifft man auf dem Wege von Jenisseisk nach Turchansk Tungusen, Samojeden und Jenissei-Ostjaken. Die Tungusen sind ein feines, geputztes und elegantes Volk; man könnte sie mit Recht Sibiriens Adel nennen*".
39. Hiekisch 1879, p. 69: "*So ist die feine, höfliche Umgangsweise der Tungusen eine von ihren Voreltern übertragene, als letztere noch ein ansässiges Volk waren und unter geregelten gesellschaftlichen Verhältnissen lebten*".
40. Hiekisch 1879, p. 69: "*Feine Regeln im gesellschaftlichen Verkehre können sich nicht gut bei einem spärlich und über weite Einöden gesäeten Jägervolke ausbilden, sondern nur wo Menschen in beständigem und regem Verkehr mit einander leben*".

ABSTRACTS

This article discusses early modern literary representations of the Tungus. Comparing translations of Isbrand Ides' travelogue, chief emissary of the Tsar's Embassy to China in the years 1692-1695, accompanied by Adam Brand whose narrative was also rapidly translated into several languages. English, French and German editions of these texts are compared to show significant differences between these versions published during a period during which the principle of the "*belles infidèles*" often inspired translators expected above all to please their targeted readership. Cuts and additional remarks also characterize these translations, notable changes which need to be taken into account by ethnohistorians as much as variants of a given passage in translation.

Cet article est consacré à la question de la représentation littéraire des Toungouses à l'époque moderne. Il propose l'étude de plusieurs traductions du récit de voyage d'Isbrand Ides, chef émissaire de l'Ambassade du Tsar en Chine dans les années 1692-1695, accompagné d'Adam Brand, auteur également d'un témoignage rapidement traduit en plusieurs langues dès sa parution. Les éditions allemandes, anglaises et françaises de ces récits sont comparées afin de montrer des divergences importantes entre ces versions produites à une époque où le principe des "belles infidèles" régissait le plus souvent le travail du traducteur, censé plaire, avant tout, au goût du lectorat ciblé. Cette approche comprenait des coupures et des commentaires, modifications notables dont l'ethnohistoire doit tenir compte aussi bien que des choix de traduction.

INDEX

Keywords: Tungus, Siberia, history, ethnohistory, travel, literature, translation, shamanism
Mots-clés: Toungouse, Sibérie, ethnohistoire, littérature, voyage, traduction, chamanisme

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